

gantic pressure of the herculean Fletcher. At this juncture his servants, alarmed by the cries of murder, rushed into the room. Fletcher, who was too much engrossed with the object of retribution, and who had by this time nearly strangled his victim, neither stirred nor turned at their entrance, but applying his face closer to the wretched Stanley, seemed to look into his eyes to try if he could there discover any signs of life.

With difficulty they dragged him from the body; his vacant look still fastened upon it, and his hands still stretched out and clenched, as if to crush and mangle it. He was insensible; the act was done, or he was still doing it in his imagination; and when he awoke from the delirium, he found the body removed, the room dark and closed up, his hands fettered behind his back, and chains, which one man's strength could not have lifted, fastened upon his legs. His dark fate was now before him: he had anticipated death and was prepared to meet it.

When Stanley recovered, his first step was to secure, under the warrant of a magistrate, the person of Fletcher. He stated in his informations, that the unhappy man had demanded money and was in the act of rifling his desk, when, upon his interference, the attempt at murder followed, which was verified by the sworn attestation of the servants. The crime of robbery was linked by this device to the imputed design of murder, and all hope of pardon or commutation was excluded.

The day of trial arrived; the court was crowded by the peasantry, who, to a solitary individual, were satisfied of Fletcher's innocence, and sympathized with him in proportion to the hatred they bore to his accuser. The counts in the indictment were read: evidence was produced to sustain them, and spoken to by counsel: when the judge inquired what Fletcher had to urge in his defence.

Fletcher shrugged his shoulders, and remained silent.

"Have you no witness to produce to character?" asked the judge.

"Plenty, plenty, please your reverence!" echoed a hundred voices at once, from every part of the court-house.

The sheriff called "Silence!" and the judge proceeded.

"Prisoner, you had better reconsider. To attempt a man's life without provocation, although the law recognises no palliations in such a case, renders your situation utterly hopeless."

"My lord! my lord!" exclaimed Fletcher, "what's the use of talking? Sure I know I'll be hanged, and I told him so. I've only one witness in the world on my side, but she doesn't know

a word about this business. If he says before your honour that he never did harm to my poor child, I'll forgive him, as I'm going into the presence of my Saviour."

The indignation of the populace seemed to boil up at this last expression, and it was only by the assistance of the military, an auxiliary that has but of late been banished from courts of justice in Ireland, that the tumult was stilled.

A messenger was finally despatched for Honor, at the instance of a particular juror, and his lordship consented to postpone judgment until the following morning, in the expectation that new testimony might be elicited from her. But the errand was in vain: Honor was not to be found, although all diligence was used by the people in the neighborhood, who felt a deep anxiety in poor Fletcher's circumstances. This, together with their aversion to Stanley, increased their suspicions of foul play: and it was even believed that she had been "made away with," to suppress her evidence. The next morning came: Fletcher was condemned, and, in three days, executed in front of the goal.

The effect produced upon the people by this transaction was universal and terrific. Stanley was pursued with execrations. Wherever he appeared, his life was in peril from the fury of the mob. He was publicly accused of the murder of Honor Fletcher; and vengeance for the blood of her father was called down upon him. His servants were warned to leave his employment on penalty of death: his crops remained without reapers and gatherers; his ground was untilled; and desolation and distraction rested upon his household. In the course of a little time, the fever of the popular mind increased to an alarming degree. Honor was never heard of. Rivers, ponds, and canals were dragged, and the woods vigilantly searched, but without the discovery of any clue to her mysterious fate. The irritation of disappointment was exasperated by the increasing tyranny of Stanley, who became more imperious and coercive as his wants and his loneliness increased. His house had been fired twice, and shots were heard frequently about his lawn; when fear and prudence prompted him at last to adopt decisive measures for his protection. He placed an agent over his estate, and left the country, announcing his intention of remaining on the continent for some years.

A long interval followed, during which the mansion was despoiled of its manorial architecture, and gradually converted to the common purposes of farming: a wing, topped with battlements and flanked by a strong buttress, was, by a violent transition, transformed into a cow-house; a concert-room that had been built at a great ex-